

Social Sciences and Transgender: The highlights since the first EPATH conference

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Introduction

- Social sciences is important for trans studies because:
 - ✓ Provides means of understanding the *dynamics, power relations, norms, values and ontological foundations for trans care*
 - ✓ *Social model of trans health is key because of the weight of discriminations faced*
 - ✓ *Allows evolving knowledge of diversities within ‘trans’ umbrella*
 - ✓ *Provides intersectional knowledge e.g. about ethnicity*
 - ✓ *Supplies knowledge about specific issues facing trans people in relation to accessing and using healthcare services*

Structure

- Methods
 - Types of research
 - Key practice-related developments
 - Key policy developments
 - Key conceptual developments
 - Conclusion
 - References
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- Acknowledgements to Penny Ralph (University of Huddersfield)

- An electronic search of literature was conducted using a number of search engines including studies published between May 2015 and February 2017 (included PROQUEST, Scopus, and University systems)
- Within each search engine, the following search terms were entered: gender dysphoria, gender identity disorder, non-binary genders, gender variance, gender diversity, trans, transgender, and transsexual
- Other sources were also used – recent reports, books etc

Example

PROQUEST - SOC ABSTRACTS:

Peer reviewed:

Publication date: 2015-05-01 - 2017-02-28 |

Document type:

Article OR Literature Review

Classification:

Social trends & culturel OR Social policyl OR Social responsibilityl OR Research & developmentl OR Public sectorl OR group interactions; social group identity & intergroup relations (groups based on race & ethnicity, age, & sexual orientation)l OR feminist/gender studies; sociology of gender & gender relationsl OR the family and socialization; sociology of sexual behaviorl OR politics and society; politics and societyl OR social problems and social welfare; social gerontologyl OR sociology of health and medicine; sociology of medicine & health carel OR political sociology/interactions; sociology of political systems, politics, & powerl OR politics; political movements/activisml OR the family and socialization; sociology of the family, marriage, & divorce

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Types of research found



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- Applied studies specifically about trans
- Studies focusing on a different issue (e.g. community safety) with some discussion of trans
- Studies that overlap with healthcare/medical research
- Country-specific studies
- Studies wrapped up within 'LGBT' acronym
- Studies that appear irrelevant but may be useful (e.g. about bullying in schools)
- Work that is primarily about gender more broadly
- Work taking place within other disciplines that is directly relevant to social sciences and healthcare providers

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Key practice-related developments

Nuanced and generally trans-positive research in a whole range of areas for example:

- Education
- Families
- Healthcare provision
- Intimate partner violence
- Prisons
- Homelessness
- Rural trans people
- Existence of prejudice and ways of tackling it
- Methodology

Example

- Shift towards more fluid and inconsistent identifications amongst young people in schools
- So that they have more diverse needs than previously
- Measures to support student wellbeing included puberty education (Jones et al 2016)

This phenomenon found elsewhere e.g.:

'...people [who] have a gender which is neither male nor female and may identify as both male and female at one time, as different genders at different times, as no gender at all, or dispute the very idea of only two genders'
(Richards et al 2016: 95).

Key policy developments

- More studies addressing trans concerns within different policy sectors, e.g.:
 - ✓ Housing for older trans people (UK – Westwood 2016)
 - ✓ City planning to be trans-inclusive (Turkey - [Güney](#), M.E and [Selçuk](#), 2016)
 - ✓ Discussions about the ways in which transnational activism is linked with success concerning trans rights at the national level (EU-wide – Ayoub 2015)
- Considerable support for diversity-positive/human rights policies in relation to trans peoples' health and wellbeing – including large studies such as FRA (2016)

Key conceptual developments



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- Shift to addressing cisgenderism and inequality regimes (Yavorsky 2016)
- Work using gender theory to inform healthcare reform (Pierce 2016)
- Studies that emphasises trans peoples' agency (Shelton 2016)
- Studies about socio-political developments – including the rise of xenophobic and discriminatory legal and policy measures in e.g. former socialist countries (Kuhar and Patternotte 2017)
- Postcolonial approaches (Erni 2016)

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Conclusion

- Social sciences has much to offer healthcare providers and policy makers
- Especially as social marginalisation, discrimination and hate crime are major factors affecting trans peoples' well-being
- Also as healthcare providers need to be aware of the diversities amongst trans people and non-binary people
- This includes those that are intersectional – for example relating to ethnicity, age, nationality.....
- AND the wider political context always frames everything...

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